



UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT
PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFT Connecticut, AFT, AFL-CIO Local 3695

Testimony on the Governors Budget Proposal
By M. Kevin Fahey,
President of the University of Connecticut
Professional Employees Association
February 13, 2009

Good afternoon Senator Harp, Senator Debicella, Representative Geregolian, Representative Miner and members of the committee. My name is Kevin Fahey and I am President of the University of Connecticut Professional Employees Association (UCPEA), a union representing more than 1,600 employees at the university's Storrs and regional campuses, the Law School and the School of Social Work.

Our union's members deliver vital services to UConn's nearly 30,000 students, as well as administrative and research support to the professors and the university administration. We provide educational services, supervise the residence halls, treat ill and injured students, and keep the computers humming. Our employees work in admissions, financial aid, the library, the cultural centers, the laboratories and in management offices. More than 350 job titles in all. We are on the front line every day and we see the damage, first-hand, that severe budget cuts incur.

My comments today, then, are directed at the impact the governor's proposed budget will have on the university and the students we serve. The Storrs-based budget has already suffered a 3 percent rescission in the current fiscal year and, during the next biennium, Gov. Rell has proposed funding levels that are below this year's levels. By setting the base so low, eliminating all current services requests, then cutting another 2 percent from that, the governor's proposed appropriations equate to 9.2 and 13.1 percent reductions for FY10 and FY11, respectively, in state support. The governor's budget also targets eliminating up to 174 positions for FY10 and another 124 positions for FY11.

All this is against a backdrop of increased student enrollment. We simply cannot continue to provide the necessary services to our students with these draconian cuts. And, without being able to increase revenues through tuition and fees – the governor on Monday requested a delay in tuition discussions and is said to want a zero increase – the university has nowhere to turn, although a task force convened by President Hogan has found as much as \$7 million that can be trimmed from our budget through recycling, energy conservation, sharply reducing print publications, eliminating some majors and closing centers, among other things. Our union's members submitted more than 300 suggestions to that task force.

UCPEA is also a member of SEBAC, and we have been involved in discussions there to find solutions to the states' economic crisis. We agree that there have to be sacrifices and we are willing to lend a hand.

The University of Connecticut and its employees have served the state well for 127 years. Annually we teach the sons and daughters of the state's farmers and mechanics, the best and the brightest, the economically deprived and the underrepresented minorities. The university's research enterprise brings hundreds of millions of dollars into the state every year. A recent study indicated that for every \$1 the state appropriates to UConn, Connecticut's GDP grows by more than \$5. Our faculty and staff work with state agencies and non-profits to help them grow. We serve on local boards and commissions, contribute to charities and to the tax assessor. We deserve respect.

The governor's budget does not show that respect. We are calling upon you, our legislators, to remedy that situation and provide a budget package that allows the university to continue doing what it does best – delivering the talent this state needs to succeed in the future.

Go Huskies!